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December 13, 2013

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Burwell:

I urge you to keep in mind the critical importance of the programs managed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) as you assist the President in preparing his Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 budget request. In 2012, the Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program directly affected the lives of over 69 million Americans and paid out over \$800 billion in benefits to aged and disabled individuals.

As our country ages, and as men and women stay in the workforce longer, the number of OASDI and SSI beneficiaries continues to grow. These societal trends are putting tremendous pressure on an agency that has already been forced to endure billions in reduced budgets over the past three years, as well as a 3.35% cut in FY2013 alone due to sequestration. In the face of all these challenges, the SSA has done an exemplary job of doing more with less. For example, compared with the \$762.3 billion SSA paid out in OASDI benefits in FY2012, it only spent \$5.5 billion, or .7 % of that total, on administrative expenses.

The programs SSA administers are those that over 179,000 of my constituents rely on every single day, but the cuts in the SSA's administrative budget have hindered their access to much-needed benefits. Over the past few years, the SSA has reduced the number of its field offices by 46, reduced the hours its field offices are open to the public, and lost 11,000 employees to retirement or normal attrition that it has not been able to replace. These changes have led to a significant degradation in its services to the public, with individuals having to wait twice as long for telephone service, 40% longer in a field office without an appointment, and a month longer for a decision on their disability claims in FY2013 as compared to FY2012.

Not only will increasing the SSA's administrative budget allow the agency to provide the standard of service to which its beneficiaries have become accustomed, but it will also save the federal government money. By providing funding that allows SSA to perform important program integrity work, the agency can cut down its number of improper payments and save taxpayers money. The SSA estimates that for every dollar spent on medical Continuing Disability Reviews, there will be \$9 in program savings over 10 years, and for every dollar spent on Supplemental Security Income redeterminations, the federal government will save \$5 over the same time period. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recognized this savings when it scored the President's FY2014 budget request, finding that an increase in direct spending for administrative funding at SSA would lead to greater savings in direct spending on federal benefits.

The programs the SSA administers touch the lives of millions of aged, disabled and low-income individuals across this country, but there is only so much the agency can do with increasingly limited funds. Therefore, I urge you to consider the above facts as you assist the President in preparing his budget request for FY2015.

Sincerely,



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress